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The Jesuit's Devotion to Mary

THERE still exists a painting of the Annunciation by a Flemish master, which, from the wall of the private chapel in the castle of Loyola, watched over Ignatius in his teens and must have been the object of his first manifestations of devotion to Mary. This painting, which represents the effective start of the work of our redemption, together with the sculptured pieta above it, wonderfully presaged the distinguishing traits which Ignatius's life-long veneration for Mary was going to assume. But of this he could not at the time have had any presentiment.

I

From the time of his conversion, Ignatius would more and more come to look upon Mary as the Lady, the Mother of his Lord and Master, who stands by Him when He is gaining the Kingdom of the Father through the Cross. For this knightly service of Our Lady, he had been prepared by his family's noble rank, by his reading of the romances of chivalry then in vogue, by his years of service as a page in a viceregal court. But all the profane and occasionally questionable aspects of such service he abandoned when he laid down his sword at Montserrat. Now his service of Mary was characterized by a chastened eagerness and an enthusiastic dedication to the most eminent and most lovable of all women. At her feet he deposits, during his memorable vigil of arms, his trusty old blade and dons the attire of those other heroes, the saints, to climb his way to a far nobler knighthood, by the favour of the Most Exalted Lady. She alone, so he feels, has the power to bestow the knighthood's accolade for service under the banner of her Son, the Lord of lords, the supreme Conqueror of the Kingdom of God.

Under her guardianship, then, he sets out along the road trodden by her Son who chose the way of poverty and humiliations. He would, by the grace of God, walk in the footsteps of the Saviour without purse or provisions, the beggar's scrip in hand, through the very country roads which His feet had sanctified.

Years later he would still intend to visit once again, with his first companions, all those holy places and hug the Lord's footprints in the spiritual reconquest of the Holy Land, where the enemies of the Christian name continued to guard the Holy Sepulchre. This steadfast longing for the sacred soil upon which the Redemption had been accomplished, and his unforgettable impressions of his sojourn in the Holy Land were, however, but a preparation for admittance into a far deeper communion in the life and work of the Saviour. For Christ was going to extend Himself not in Ignatius alone, not in a little company only, but through a worldwide flung religious order, which by Ignatius's instrumentality He would call into being.

II

And so, in the days ahead, the followers of Ignatius would have to re-live in their turn the vigil of arms of Montserrat. To that end, then, will every Jesuit, in the course of the Spiritual Exercises, turn to Mary, not only when he first comes face to face with Christ Our Lord, the Eternal King who calls for followers, but also as often as he hears the summons afresh, and beseech her to obtain his enrolment under the standard of the Crucified. To Mary first will he make the plea, in the meditations on Two Standards and on Three Classes of Men, to be enlisted for the war against the Evil One and to experience along with Jesus perfect poverty of spirit, insults and contempt. To Mary, once more, in the meditation of Three Kinds of Humility, will go the Jesuit's first supplication to be granted that supremely precious Third Kind, assimilation, for sheer love, to Christ destitute of all things and overwhelmed with insults.

For Ignatius knows for certain that, if once Mary has graciously accepted so momentous a request, the Son and the Father, in Their turn, cannot be reluctant to grant it. Is not the work of man's Redemption, to which the Son is to admit every Jesuit, also the predominant interest of the Mother? Is not the Redemption the very *raison d'être* of Mary herself and of all her glorious prerogatives and privileges? Must not Mary be in a singular way the Mother of those who are associated in the work of her Son?

It is from this consideration of Mary's part in Christ's redemptive work and of her influence upon the choice and formation of apostles that the Jesuit's devotion to the Mother of God draws its distinctive characteristics. Mary is to the Jesuit the woman who renders to God the uttermost glory by being the one unimpaired and perfect creature, and the Mother of the Messiah in whom all things are restored. She is that one point of light among benighted mankind, the gentle Lady of his contemplation of the Incarnation to whom the Three divine Persons dispatch the angel "to the city of Nazareth" to announce that the day of salvation has come.

Throughout all the mysteries of Jesus's life, the intimate re-living of which the Jesuit is granted in the course of the Exercises to share one by one, Mary is the inseparable associate and Mother who, from the Nativity in Bethlehem where "there was no room for them in the inn", through the Circumcision, the prophecy of the Sword, the Flight into Egypt, the sojourn in exile, the Tarrying of the Holy Child in the Temple, "by keeping in her heart the memory of it all" becomes day by day more fully initiated into the true ways of the Messiah so contrary to all current expectations.

Throughout all the incidents of her Son's public life, which in mind she goes through with Him, Mary grows into the Mother of Sorrows, who is drawn along into His supreme sacrifice, is merged with that sacrifice, is co-offering it—unto the ignominy of His official rejection by His nation, unto the tortures of a criminal's death on the Cross.

But Mary is then also the first to experience with her Son the triumph of His resurrection.

Ready now to carry on her appointed rôle of Mother to the Mystical Body of Jesus, she will be, through her universal intercession and her disposal of all graces, the living link between the divine Persons and the soul that is being called and admitted to share in the redemptive work of the Son, to the glory of the Father, in the charity of the Holy Ghost.

Mary is to the Jesuit the second Eve, the Mother of redeemed mankind whose redemption must be ever more fully achieved in every individual; his very own Mother, too, because she is the Mother of Jesus in the fulness of His being the one link between creation and Creator and for the total extension of His task through the ages.

In one word, Mary is to the Jesuit the Mother of his participated life with and upon Jesus, for the greater glory of the Father.

L. REYPPENS

For What do the Ignatian Exercises Train?*

IN all spheres of life—whether it be sports, theatre, film, education, profession, armed services, etc.—people constantly go through exercises. All exercises have in them an element of "mere practice" or preparation, and at the same time already *embody* something of the "reality" for which they prepare. "Practice" and "reality" both enter into the "exercises" as formal elements; and also there is a permanent tension between the two.

*A condensation of J. Schierse S.J.'s "Uebung und ernstfall in den Ignatianischen Exercizien" in *Geist und Leben* 1952, pp.305-313.

Here we intend to examine the relations between "Practice" and "Reality" in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius.¹ This will enable us to see the S.E. in their proper light and function, and to appraise them correctly.

I

"Just as taking a walk, journeying on foot, and running are bodily exercises, so", says St Ignatius (1st Introd. Observ.), "am I describing here soul's exercises." Now, all exercise is taken in view of a specific accomplishment to be obtained, and the value of the exercise is measured by its efficiency. The danger with exercises is that their relation to the pursued accomplishment be lost sight of or that the accomplishment aimed at is of such an elusive or changeable nature that the proper exercise for its attainment cannot be cast into fixed forms.

Take St Ignatius's "*ambulare, ire, currere*": the sportsman trains himself for the race. The only noteworthy difference between the practice-exercise and the real event is that the latter is final, decisive and cannot be interrupted midway for a new better start: the rest are only accidental differences of circumstances, such as time, place, onlookers, reward, etc. The exercise and the accomplishment pursued through it are of an identical nature.

Similarly, the practice which actors, singers, musicians, go through is made up of the same actions, situations, expressions, as the execution. There may be accidental differences on the day of the real performance to prompt the actors to strive for perfection: but there is no essential difference between what is materially done at practice and at execution.

Military drill runs a greater risk of being inefficacious, because the 'art' of warfare consists precisely in inventing new tactics and new weapons, to which all the drill and manoeuvres of the enemy could not have prepared him. Victories will mostly be due to having found a way of rendering the enemy's "exercises" inefficacious.

Fourthly, education. The formation of youth for their future behaviour in life—if we consider the aptitudes and the stage of development of the exercitant—appears decisively condemned to inefficaciousness. The young man cannot be put in the identical situations wherein he will find himself in later real life; nor can he be given an exact knowledge of how testing the situations will be, and in what conditions of strength he will find himself. It is for the educator to provoke, or profit by, less exacting tests, adapted to lesser capacities of 'taking it', and rely on it that—thanks to acquired habits—the faculties will grow in strength and be able to face stronger tests. Education must needs remain to a certain extent aleatory, its efficaciousness unassured.

1. We shall use the abbreviation "S.E." "spiritual exercises"

Are the S.E. as efficacious as sports or theatre practice? as unlikely to succeed as military drill for a war that promises to be unpredictable in tactics or weapons? as irremediably inadequate as character-education, yet efficacious to a point?

II

The answer will depend on two previous questions, which we shall now examine. First, Which is the aim of the S.E.?; and secondly, How far can the S.E. realize this aim during practice?

A. Which object do the S.E. envisage?

The aim of the S.E. is to "seek and find the will of God", not in the abstract, but in the concrete form of "ordering one's life with a view to salvation" (ann. 1). This constructive goal requires the previous cutting away of all disturbing attachments that have their roots in sin and disorderly love (cfr S.E. n.63).

To understand this one must, we think, go back to the ideal of perfection held out in the Gospel, to the *data of the Christian Revelation* as found in the New Testament.

Now, the milestones which Synoptic Tradition marks on the road to salvation are: *repentance* and *conversion* in the believing acceptance of the Good Tidings of the Kingdom of God (Mk 1/15; Mt 4/17), *call* of the apostles (Mk 1/17; Mt 4/19), their *election* and mission (Mk 3/13; Mt 10/1), the necessity of carrying the *cross* after Christ (Mk 8/34; Mt 16/24; Lk 9/23), the promise of a share in Christ's glory (Lk 22/29; Mt 20/28). These were historical events which God, the principal Agent, directed.

It is in *this* perspective that the S.E. must be understood: in them, too, God is the principal Agent, and their success depends on the personal and direct intervention of God at all the important junctures².

In other words, the object pursued in the S.E. is *the work of Redemption in Christ Jesus*. What happened to the Son of God has become the norm of our sanctification. But this work of

2. Hence the retreatmaster is told not to place himself between God and the retreatant. It is much better that "the Creator and Lord deal personally with him" (Ann. 15). Not that Ignatius wants to foster some sort of eccentric mysticism; nor does he see God's intervention in the form of visions, voices, or private revelations; Ignatius is sober and matter-of-fact to the extreme. The exercitant shall use his brains illumined by faith, shall acknowledge the God-given goal of life and bring his way of living in line with it. God need not use the 'First Time' to make His will clear; in fact, this Time must be considered most exceptional (S.E. n.175). God's will may be equally manifest in the 'Third Time' (178-188). *We should, therefore, not seek the Reality envisaged by the S.E. in some extraordinary psychic phenomena*, as if the conversion of the First Week were only real if accompanied by a strong commotion of the soul, as if one had necessarily to experience an inner illumination in order to solve any and every doubt of conscience about vocation or spiritual progress. This would be expecting at once too much and too little: too much, because the S.E. cannot contain the full Reality envisaged; too little, because that Reality is far bigger than any psychic effect even of supernatural origin.

Redemption is by nature eschatological: its diverse stages —call, selection for particular service, glorification— come to final perfection only in the definitive Kingdom of God. “As yet it is not revealed what we shall be” (1 Jo.3/2) and “this hidden life with Christ in God” (Col.3/3) remains hidden even in the visible Church. Eschatological, too, are the S.E.: whatever a man does—even unto his last breath—to further the final coming of the Kingdom in himself, remains of the nature of an exercise: it can and must be repeated, rehearsed, improved, corrected, testproven.

B. In how far do the S.E. effect their object?

It must be well understood from the start that the S.E. are not to be made for their own sake: they are not an end in themselves, they are subsidiary to a goal that is quite distinct from them. Neither must the S.E. be held as the only way—or even the first way—of coming into contact with the Christian Mystery, or of getting practice in the reality of Christian life.

Nothing, I believe, throws more light on the nature and place of the S.E. than to confront them with the sacraments.

The sacraments are the first ways of God with man. In Baptism and Penance *conversion* to God in Christ takes place, in the Eucharist we are *called* to a communion of life and suffering with Christ, Confirmation gives us the Spirit for our apostolic *mission*, the Priesthood and Matrimony assign us our *place and task* in the Church, Extreme Unction anoints the dying as a final preparation before their entering into the fulness of the Christian life and reality.

Even the sacraments are not ends in themselves: they are only signs of the past, present and future Redemption by Christ. As ‘efficacious signs of grace’ they possess a special relation to the eschatological reality of Christian life. Every step is really a step forward, yet even those sacraments that imprint a character are always open to a deepening renewal on the part of the recipient: with these he has reached, not so much a goal, as a point of ascent from which no return is possible. Already the validity of the sacraments depends on the intention and co-operation of man; their fruitfulness depends on the actual use one makes of their graces³.

The S.E., it might be objected, are little concerned with the sacraments: Baptism and Confirmation are not even mentioned, Communion and Confession only twice [18, 44]. However, the

3. History shows that, when, v.g., the sacrament of Penance was rarely received, people practised penance most vigorously, whilst now that confession has become a regular institution the spirit of penance has all but gone. The same could be said about the reception of the Holy Eucharist and its effects on daily life. To overcome this self-sufficient sacramentalism is, therefore, one of the most urgent tasks of today’s care of souls. It is not the mechanical, oft-repeated sign that guarantees Redemption, but the personal appropriation of grace in faith, hope and charity (comp. 1 Cor. 10/1-11) — which is also the specific task and fruit of the S.E.

S.E. do lead one to a worthy and frequent reception of the sacraments. A general confession, f.i., is enjoined in the First Week. But again, note the perspective: the *accent* is not on the sacramental event, but on the *consciously personal, spiritual and voluntary appropriation of the Real Redemption*. Hence, the stress is on the subjective disposition. Sacraments, therefore, and Exercises support one another and serve the same purpose, viz. to overcome disorderly inclinations and to accomplish better the will of God.

Still, the S.E. owe their origin, not to sacramental, but to pneumatic experiences. On his very sickbed Ignatius began to write down the inner movements of his soul: the results we find in the Rules for discerning spirits. The struggle of his soul during his *repentance* and *conversion* we find reflected in the First Week. He himself at Manresa lived the *call* and *election* of the Second Week, although the acceptance and the full significance of his offer were made known to him only nineteen years later in the vision of La Storta. The Third and Fourth Weeks are proofs of his growing *communion* with the suffering and rising Christ. Finally, the Foundation and Contemplation for Love go back to the Cardoner vision, though their formulation came only later, in Paris.

Did Ignatius think he could condense into four weeks all the supernatural light and strength which the Holy Ghost had taken so many years to instil in his own soul?—The *real 'exercises given by God Himself'*, involving the *actual* experience of conversion, call, crucifixion, etc., are made mostly independently of the ascetical exercises; they take a very long time and are connected with serious disturbances in real life. It cannot be the intention of the S.E. to force such extraordinary experiences into the short space of thirty days or less: they are neither normal nor necessary in a retreat. *The heart of the matter is to understand that God made it possible for us in Christ to do penance, be called, make an election, and to suffer, die, rise with Him.*

The reality or object of the S.E. is, therefore, realizable in every retreat —of course in different degrees of perfection, as befits an exercise. The exercitant has passed through an experience of all the stages of the Christian life, and knows, besides, exactly in which state of life he may rely on the graces of God to carry the experience further. There are, therefore, firm grounds to hope that —thanks to the habits implanted during the retreat— his faculties will constantly grow in strength, be able to triumph in stronger tests, and finally flower and fruit forth in the consummation of the eternal bliss of redeemed souls.

The work of Redemption —even of individual redemption— is by its very nature eschatological: it cannot be consummated in this world, the retreatant will have to continue 'exercising' till the hour of his release from his earthly bondage. But his period of sustained intense drill has given him a mighty proper start.

Cor Maternum

MANY incidents are related in biographies and panegyrics of St Ignatius that make him appear as a very strict disciplinarian, and the general impression is given that he was rather something of a martinet. Is it not the common opinion that "Ignatius could be very kind BUT you had to keep in step . . . or else!"? And examples are cited, names are mentioned: "He hardly spoke a kind word to Polanco; he made Nadal weep with his severity; and Lainez, poor man . . ."

So writes Ribadeneira. And yet the same Ribadeneira insists that the *chief means* by which Ignatius sought to instil a solid religious spirit into his sons consisted in "winning their hearts by the most exquisite attentions suggested by his paternal tenderness". "Truly no mother, howsoever devoted, could show her children a solicitude comparable to that of our holy Father for his sons, specially the sick and the (spiritually) weak." (See IGNATIANA, p. 40.)

Others, too, though not unaware of his occasional severity, characterize the Founder rather by his tenderness, and consider his manifestations of rigidity as rare exceptions. They would prefer to say, "Ignatius could be very stiff, BUT his acts of kindness and consideration were continual, exquisite and unexpected."

"On every occasion", writes Lancicius¹, "Ignatius manifested his motherly affection for his companions." Fr Huonder writes, "Father Gonsalves relates that his affection was that of a mother, and he wanted all the superiors of the Society to be animated likewise; when, after a number of failures, he finally found for the Roman College a Rector who had this fatherly care, he decided (against all the customs of the Society) that he should remain in office for life; for he could hardly find a similar one to take his place."²

Which of the two is the true picture? Which is the correct appreciation? — Certain elements of the answer are definitively acquired

1. "His extreme severity, in regard to even small defects, was reserved to men of outstanding virtue or men in authority, such as Laynez, Polanco, Gonsalves, Nadal" (491). "He never (reprimanded severely) unless they really deserved a correction" (500). "Whenever he had to admonish novices or juniors, he did it in a gentle way: he made them feel ashamed of what they had done, required submission of will and judgement; but was careful to avoid any expression that might crush them" (500).

1. *Mon. Ign.* IV, 1, 496. See also 492, 495.— As all our quotations are taken from this same volume of the *Mon. Ign.*, we shall hereafter give as reference only the page number (between brackets).

2. Huonder 124; Dictam. 496. And yet both these writers point out the anomaly of mixed severity and tenderness. [*Mon. Ign.* IV, 1, 500. (Lancicius, 195, N.86 Gonsalves).]

2. That to the sick and the young he never showed anything else than solicitude, consideration and affection is beyond all doubts.

For the *sick* he went to any lengths. To the Rules of the Infirmarian he added the clause, "He should diligently inquire from the sick which members of the community they like best, and allow only such brethren to visit them" (501). — "Whenever he noticed that a young religious looked somewhat pale and weak, he earnestly inquired after the cause. Then he would order him to have a longer sleep, or he would tell the minister to give him a special diet, or to diminish his work. He also made it a rule for the minister that those who were making a retreat should have more nourishing food during those days, just as the convalescent. For, at that time, (adds Lancicius) the fervour of the retreatants was so great that it weakened their constitutions" (492).

"When the season of Lent was approaching, he used to call the doctor and have everybody examined . . . Those under 21 never received permission to fast every day of Lent, even though they were quite strong . . . He went so far as to spend several hours going again over the list of those whom the doctor allowed to fast, for fear that someone who was not really able to bear the fast should feel himself obliged to fast by the approval of the physician. And he ordered that a similar list should be drawn up in the Roman and the German Colleges. The first year that this regulation was issued, Polanco made some delay in complying: Ignatius thereupon forbade him to take any food himself until he had composed his list in consultation with the doctor" (494).

Indeed his exceptional severity was oftenest caused by his discovering some lack of solicitude for the sick. "He punished every negligence in this matter . . . and did not spare the minister if he was not warned immediately when somebody fell ill. He once wanted to expel from the house a minister, called Bernard, in the middle of the night, because he had failed to supply something for a sick man" (499).

When our Father at last was forced by age to give over the reins of government to a Vicar, he reserved to himself the care of the sick (500).

As to the *young*, "(At the time that Manareus joined the Society) Ignatius gave permission to him and to the other novices to come freely and have a talk with himself. He invited them to a chat in the garden, or elsewhere. When Manareus fell ill, our Father went himself to see and comfort him lovingly. Once he brought him a basket of sweets and said, 'Oliveri, here is something I have just received from a princess of Sicily. It is for you. I hope you will enjoy it. Take it like a prescription from the doctor.' He also invited Manareus sometimes to come and share his own meal (He used to take his meals privately) and

would then offer to Oliveri an apple or a pear which he had peeled on his fork " (508).

Our Father liked young people to have a good appetite, "and for this reason liked to invite to his table Benedict Palmius, a bulky youth whom he enjoyed to see eating. Fearing he might feel shy, Ignatius would press him to take another helping . . ." (496).

"He was most careful that there should be no reason for anybody — particularly the young— to feel slighted. One day he received three candidates from Ferrara. An abbot, who was related to them, had accompanied them to Rome and had been invited to the Roman College: Ignatius told the three candidates to come to dinner with him (although they were still in the First Probation). But he took the trouble to inform the other candidates at the same time that they too were invited to the Roman College for the next day, lest they should feel themselves treated with less favour and courtesy " (492).

3. But what about the healthy and the formed Fathers?

"He always spoke to his companions in such a benevolent way, and dealt with them so gently, that he appeared to be all affection. The result was (explains Lancicius) that all without exception loved him in return: in those days there was no one who was not convinced that Ignatius loved him dearly " (491; see 195,N.86 Gonsalves).

An overstatement? Well, Nadal himself, who reputedly was one of those treated with severity, writes that "everyone was always happy and radiant in his room " (471).

And the encouragement he gave! He used to speak highly of the work of others in their absence and with special delight "praised their efforts in the presence of men from whom he could expect that they would report his expressions of esteem to those who had earned them. He really used all possible means to keep everybody content, generous and happy " (492).

"One day he heard that Benedict Pererius, a professor at the Roman College, had courageously denounced the writings of Ludovicus Vivio as suspect of heresy: he called the Father and generously praised him " (495).— "Benedict Palmius, not yet a priest, was already a preacher of some renown. One day Ignatius heard that Benedict had been telling an old lady that he would preach the following day and urging her to come and listen to his sermon. Ignatius relished such candour; and when, soon after, he had an occasion to commit some work to him, he added teasingly, 'Benedict, if you do this well, I'll get you one more old lady to come and listen to your sermons '." (495).

4. And when he judged that it was necessary for someone to receive an admonition, "if he knew that the fact of the admonition coming from himself would cause special grief, he would try to have someone else make the remark, so as to avoid discouragement " (495).

He did, of course, give admonitions in person, and punishments too: but Ribadeneira insists that "he made it evident that his severity was inspired by zeal for discipline and observance of the rules, —not by any natural harshness" (387).

Besides, nobody who came in contact with him would have dreamt of suspecting Ignatius of being swayed by natural passions. He undoubtedly had his natural character in hand; he had rather an over-sensitive conscience.

"Whenever our blessed Father met one of ours," so Lancicius writes (490), "the thought came to his mind of the price paid for that soul by the Redeemer... This thought gave him so much consolation that for some time he could not refrain from beaming upon those he met. But later on he discovered that such a thing was exaggerated: he checked himself and even punished himself with one stroke of his discipline for every fault in this matter. Still, he always kept smiling so kindly at the companions he met that they were sure he kept them ever in his heart."

"He was very watchful to avoid even the slightest appearance of partiality, was most careful to give to nobody the impression of being less dear to him than others. That is why at the election of the first General he did not name anyone of his companions but wrote that he gave his vote to the one who would receive the majority of the suffragia (except himself). And again, when he fell ill and a Vicar General had to be appointed, he did not make the nomination himself but entrusted the matter to the consultors." (493)

On another occasion two Jesuits were to be appointed who would stay in the Papal palace and advise Pope Marcel II on the reform of the Church. "He did not designate them by himself; he asked the consultors to do it. Only, he listed so many talents and qualities required in the candidates, that the consultors could only choose those he had in view. But in that way nobody could feel slighted by Ignatius or reasonably envious of those appointed; nor did the common good suffer in any way." (493)

Conclusion: Such are the outlines of the over-all picture: a deeply religious man, who looked at everybody through the eyes of the Redeemer; continually anxious to give encouragement; always fearful of even appearing to slight or grieve; desiring nothing so much as to see contentment and happiness around him... and perfect master over his natural propensities. Does it look like a martinet?

LUC VERSTRAETE

Our Lady Takes Ignatius in Hand¹

IGNATIUS was convalescing. To allay the tediousness of the endless days he resorted to pious readings, and little by little became conscious of the very different states of mind produced on the one hand by the reading of romances and on the other by that of the lives of the saints . . . Then,

“Being awake one night, he clearly saw a likeness of Our Lady with the Infant Jesus. During a considerable space of time he received an excess of consolation. And there remained so great a disgust with all his past life, and especially with its impurity, that he thought that all the impressions which up to then had been so engraved on his soul were torn out. (Thereafter) never did he give the slightest consent to any impure suggestion.”

Meanwhile he went on with his readings and his pious desires. As soon as he began to move somewhat about the house, the thought occurred to him to make extracts of his readings. These he inserted in an accountbook in-4, putting the words of Our Lord in red ink and those of Our Lady in blue. In this way he filled three hundred pages . . .

He decided to leave Loyola and secretly resolved to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In his baggage the knight carried a little money, a book of hours of Our Lady, a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows, and the famous notebook in-4.

Iñigo persuaded the brother who accompanied him to make a vigil at the shrine of Our Lady of Aránzazu, a much frequented shrine with which the Loyolas, and indeed all the Azpeitians, were well acquainted. On his departure from Loyola, which he intended never to see again, and on the threshold of a new life, he came to place his journey and his plans under the protection of Mary. In this Basque church, in the depths of the night shadows, what feelings of gratitude, what holy desires, what eager petitions must he have breathed at the foot of the miraculous statue! In 1554 (22 years later) he still recalled the graces received in that vigil.

(Then on he went, —passing through the land of Álava, where he had fought many a battle at the side of Juan Manrique de Lara. His old master, the Viceroy of Navarre, was at that time residing at Nájera; but the past was now wiped out.) Only Santa Maria La Real, the magnificent collegiate church, had a place in his memory. Through some servants he sent a note for the Duke's treasurer, asking for some arrears of pay due to him. (The money was sent willingly, and) of the ducats received Iñigo made two parts: one he gave for distribution among certain persons to whom he felt himself under obligation,

1. Culled from Fr Dudon's *St Ignatius of Loyola*. The passages between quotation marks are from the *Pilgrim's Tale*.

and the other was reserved for a picture of Our Lady, in the church of Navarrete probably or in a neighbouring *ermita*. The picture was poorly mounted, and Iñigo left the sum necessary to provide it with a "proper adornment". Then he started off on his mule from Navarrete for Montserrat.

"Now, while he pursued his way he was joined by a Moor riding along on a mule. They went on together, and in their conversation they happened to speak of Our Lady." The Moor expressed the opinion that the conception of Jesus was divine, but could not believe that Mary afterwards remained a virgin. "And he proposed objections, and would not be moved from the stand he took in spite of the many arguments which the pilgrim gave him." They finally separated and the Moor took the lead. But Iñigo "was discontented with himself... feeling that he had failed in his duty... Never should a Christian like himself have tolerated such language so dishonourable to the Mother of God. Was there not still time to avenge the Blessed Virgin, pursue the blasphemer and punish his rashness by a few well-aimed thrusts of his dagger?" For a long time Iñigo pondered... and finally left it to Providence to show him by a sign where his duty lay. (The sign was for leaving well alone.)

(15 days of travelling brought him in view of Montserrat, with its Benedictine monastery and dominated by its sanctuary built for "the Black Virgin", a venerated statue that dated back more than 800 years.) Before setting out on the climbing path to Montserrat, Iñigo made a stop. For his pilgrimage to Jerusalem he bought some cloth of the kind used to make sacks and had a tunic made of it that reached down to his feet. He also bought a pilgrim's staff, a small gourd and a pair of sandals. "As his mind was still filled by the memories of the romances of chivalry" (so he says himself), he decided "to make a watch of arms, all night, without sitting or lying down, before the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat".

"After having prayed and talked with his confessor, he made a general confession in writing which took him three days." This done "on the vigil of the Annunciation he went as secretly as he could, after nightfall, to a poor man, removed his fine clothes (and gave them to the pauper) and put on his penitential sack". Then he went to cast himself on his knees before the altar of Our Lady and there "kneeling for a while and then standing, staff in hand, he passed the whole night".

On the morning of the Annunciation feast "as soon as the day began to dawn, the pilgrim left, so as to escape notice, and went off—not by the direct road to Barcelona, where he ran the risk of meeting people who might recognize him and honour him², but by a detour—to a place called Manresa. He proposed

2. It appears to have been at this very time that the Pope-elect Adrian of Utrecht was to pass along that road, escorted by all the Navarese nobility, on his way across Navarre and Catalonia to take ship for Rome.

to remain there a few days, in the hospital, and also to make some notes in his copy-book, which he never laid aside and in which he found a great deal of consolation."

The few days stretched into ten months, and the 'some notes' became the first draft of the Exercises.

Manresa possessed, around its magnificent (ex-)cathedral dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, a host of chapels and oratories where the Mother of God was venerated: Our Lady of the Cloister, depending on the cathedral's enclose; near the Urgel gate, Our Lady of Valldaura; near the hospital, Our Lady of the People; near the gate of Sobrerrocha, Our Lady of Romey; near the old bridge, Our Lady of the Guide; and on the outskirts of the town, Our Lady of Joncadella, St Mary of the Guard, St Mary of Monistrol, St Mary of the Plain, St Mary of Metaderch, and finally the one which grew most dear to Ignatius, Our Lady of Villadordis.

The pious little town (of not more than 1800 inhabitants) possessed also a Carmelite convent with a very prosperous Confraternity of the Holy Trinity, a Dominican priory with a Confraternity of the Rosary, a Cistercian settlement. Near the old bridge there was a house for the sick alongside the chapel of St Mark and St Barbara; and finally there was the Hospital of St Lucy, for the poor and sick strangers, also with an adjoining chapel.

Here the pilgrim settled down, first at the Hospital of St Lucy; some time later, during a serious illness due to his excessive penances, in the home of a compassionate family; but for the greater part of his stay in a little cell in the priory of the Dominicans.

He went bareheaded, letting his hair and his beard grow long and unkempt; he did not trim his nails; he walked without a shoe on his left foot, while on his right, which was still unhealed and bandaged, he wore a sandal.—He went from door to door begging his daily food, but accepted neither meat nor wine. When well, he was sometimes to be found in St Lucy caring for the sick, or at the cave for penance and solitary prayer, or at *Nuestra Señora de Villadordis*, or teaching the catechism to children and the poor, or in spiritual conversations with anyone who wished to serve God a little more fervently.

His life of prayer was amazing. From the first day he adopted the practice of assisting daily at Mass, vespers and compline at the cathedral. After he moved to the priory he rose at night to assist at matins. He recited privately the hours of Our Lady from the book he had brought with him from Loyola. Besides that, he gave seven hours to mental prayer, which he always made on his knees. And he read pious books.

For quite a time he was much troubled with scruples and finally resolved to neither eat nor drink until the Lord came to his help (he remembered to have read about a saint who had done

this): after a week his confessor bade him eat and, though he felt still vigorous, he obeyed. Then "the Lord wished to reveal Himself in a sleep" and he saw "in a great clearness" that he should confess his past sins no more. "Henceforth he remained free from these agonies of conscience, and he held it certain that Our Lord in His mercy delivered him."

One day he was found unconscious in the oratory of Our Lady of Villadordis. Taken first to St Lucy, then into the home of a pious family, he became seriously ill; so high was his fever that he thought himself to be at the point of death. He recovered, but the winter of 1522 was very hard on him: worn out by his penances and fasts, inadequately clothed, he fell ill once more and was taken care of by another family. He remained, however, very weak and suffered from frequent pains in the stomach.

And through all those months "Our Lord deigned to instruct him as a school-master does". The expression is Iñigo's own.

"He had a great devotion to the most Holy Trinity; and so, he prayed every day to each of the three divine Persons and made a fourth prayer to the Holy Trinity... And one day, being about to recite the hours of Our Lady on the steps of the Dominican monastery, his understanding began to be elevated. And it was as though he had seen the Holy Trinity..."

"Once it was shown to him how God created the world..." Another day, in the church of the Dominicans "when he was assisting at Mass, at the moment of the elevation... he clearly saw with his intelligence how Christ was present in the Blessed Sacrament"—"Quite frequently, and for long times, while at prayer he has seen with his interior eyes the humanity of Christ."—"He has also seen Our Lady in like manner..."

At his canonization process the old inhabitants of Manresa, or their descendants, testified that he had been seen having visions and raptures, at the cave, at the cross of Our Lady of the Guide near the old bridge, near another cross at the convent of the Friars Preacher, at the Hospital of St Lucy, at Our Lady of Villadordis...

And "once, when he was going on a visit of devotion to a church a little more than a mile from Manresa by the road which runs along the river Cardoner, he sat down on the road... and was given to understand many things, some spiritual, some concerning the faith, and others human wisdom... with so great a clearness that it all seemed new to him... and he thought himself another man, possessed of a (new) intelligence".

* * *

Thus did Our Lady take Ignatius in hand. I say "Our Lady": for, whosoever has practised or even read the Exercises can infer from the repeated Triple Colloquies that Ignatius always began his prayer by putting himself under the aegis of the Mother of Christ.

"This evidently became his regular practice: At all momentous periods of his life we find it recorded. At La Storta, at his first Mass on Christmas Day in the chapel of the Manger at St Mary Major, during his deliberation on whether or not to accept any income . . . And the day chosen for the first Vows (Aug. 15, 1534) and its yearly renewal was a feast of Our Lady . . .

* * *

Towards the end of February (1523) Iñigo decided to resume his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

After his last illness the Canielles family had persuaded him to dress a little more comfortably, to wear shoes and a hat; they gave him "two dark garments of heavy cloth, called *burel* and a cap of the same material".

Before leaving, the pilgrim made a last visit to Our Lady of Villadordis and Our Lady of Montserrat, —no doubt to place the journey to Jerusalem under the protection of "the Black Virgin".

Then on February 29 he went on his way. Wrapped in his coarse woollen tunic, with a crucifix hanging from his neck, on his breast a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows which he had brought from Loyola, on foot, he took the road to Barcelona.

MORTIFICATION

Fr Bartoli (*Life of St Ignatius*, vol.II, p.355) summarizes thus the Mind of our Founder about Mortification:

Penance and mortification cannot be measured out in an equal degree to all; nor can even a general rule be laid down for each individual as to his practice of them at all times. Our body does not belong to ourselves but to God; and to Him we have to render an account, not only if by too much care and indulgence we have made it the cause of our falling into sin, but also if by indiscreet treatment we have rendered it incapable of performing works of greater utility to ourselves and more conducive to the glory of God.

If the flesh revolts against the spirit, it must be subdued by extra austerities until it grows humble and submissive. But when the spirit is at peace with the body, and we ourselves disposed to serve God with so loyal a heart that we should prefer a thousand deaths to the misfortune of offending Him once, then we ought to use corporal mortification with discretion: lest the flesh, too much weakened, should clog the works of the spirit —whereas, being once deadened as it were, the flesh seconds the spirit and aids it in its labours.

Cum permissu Superiorum